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The molecular links between obesity, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes mellitus have been poorly understood. In the November 21 *Nature*, Jiro Hirosumi and colleagues describe a role for the **c-Jun amino-terminal kinases** (JNKs) in obesity (*Nature*, **420**:333-336, November 21, 2002). JNK activity was elevated in both genetic and dietary murine models of obesity. Analysis of knockout mice showed that the *jnk1* gene (but not the *jnk2* gene) was essential for diet-induced obesity. The *jnk1* knockout mice displayed reduced adipocyte size, decreased adiposity and adipose redistribution. The JNK1-deficiency also protected from obesity-induced insulin resistance, even when crossed with leptin-deficient obese mice.

References

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